



BAMBURGH SCHOOL

Special iApps Case Study

November – December 2018

INTRODUCTION

Our school is a small school in the North East of England for children with special needs from age 4 to 16 years. We have been trialling the apps for 4-6 weeks. The apps have been used with various needs in mind and have benefitted the children on a 1:1 basis and in group settings.

- Ms Allison Hills (Teaching Assistant)

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HONEYSUCKLE CLASS



I have been using the apps with one child in particular who struggles with day to day classroom life. The child is often unable, or unwilling to join in with lessons and struggles to maintain attention for longer than a few minutes. Special iApps allowed us to continue to progress his education even when he was not taking part in lessons. The child would be given an option of lesson or apps, he

would mostly choose apps. We could then give him the iPad with a lesson related app such as words or numbers, and this meant he was still expanding his knowledge without the pressures of the lesson environment. He would then sit with the iPad for a prolonged period of time, for example, 25-30 minutes and applauded himself whenever he correctly matched all 4 words or pictures. 'Special Words' has also expanded the child's vocabulary, even though he was already fairly verbal, he would repeat words from the app and begin to use them in more relevant speech.

'Special Numbers' was also particularly useful to reinforce either what had been covered in a lesson or to help teach the lesson when the child could not cope in that environment. In class we covered 'same and different' which is a particular maths topic that 'Special Numbers' covers, this proved to be very useful and was something he would willingly engage in.

We found that the apps were easy enough for a child to use independently and the children would often prefer to figure the apps out by themselves rather than being shown, which proved useful when working to time constraints. Each child was able to switch from one app to another with ease and was also able to change from matching picture to picture to matching word to picture etc. independently.



Special iApps has allowed us to see the hidden potential in some of our children that I feel we would not have been able to see otherwise. We have used the apps with other children in the class with great success. The apps have proved vital for any EAL children and have encouraged speech and more initiated conversation.

- Miss Jess Hindhaugh (Special Educational Needs Teacher)

One of the things I loved about the apps is how they can be tailored to individuals. 'Special Stories' played a big part in our class when preparing the children for changes. One girl told me that she hated school trips as they were scary. To combat this fear of the unknown I decided to do a 'Special story' for an upcoming trip to a panto. I went out on my own taking photos of what she could expect to see on the journey and included the venue and some images from the panto. I started off simple with a picture of our school, to show that the day would start as normal. Then there was a photo of our minibus (I liked the fact that I could even add in sound to let her hear the engine). The pictures from inside the venue were a good idea as she wanted to know what the seats were like. The photos of the cast were helpful as the appearance of a panto Dame is very different to, well anything really. I chose to share this story with a group of children I thought may find the trip overwhelming. It helped us to have clear expectations of our trip and encouraged questions and discussion. Thankfully, our trip was a success! I will definitely plan more 'Special Stories' in the future.

Another app that I have been using is 'My First Signs'. I have particularly enjoyed using this one as I am currently learning British Sign Language at college. I chose to work with a girl with communication difficulties, as I knew she was familiar with some signs and I thought we could expand on her vocabulary (and mine). She enjoyed the 1:1 working and smiled and laughed as we worked through our signs. One of the main reasons I chose this girl to work with is that I really wanted to help her confidence as she becomes quite overwhelmed quite easily. She picked up the signs very quickly and enjoyed the app, and her confidence to use her signs to communicate improved. Partly from knowing that we both know some signs, she would start to choose to talk to me, initiating conversations herself. She would often use her voice rather than just signing, as the app encourages us to do both. I actively encourage her to sign in group time and we teach the other children too. This is great for her confidence. We have also found more of her sense of humour coming through as she is signing "cheeky teacher" and chatting with her friends. My proudest moment was when she got told off for talking on the carpet. The confidence she is gaining from this 1:1 time with an appropriate app is amazing to watch and be part of. I've also realised that she knows a lot more signs than I thought. When we went out to the panto, she and I signed the songs together, with signs beyond what I thought she knew.

Then it was my turn to be overwhelmed. Even her parents have noticed a difference with her communication and confidence at home.

Up until now we haven't really used any apps in our class and our technology was limited to our smartboard, which is great for lessons, but not individual work. Since the introduction of these apps our IT manager is working with the Headteacher to put more technology in our classroom. It has opened up so much potential in both the children and our expectations, as we now know we can explore more technology than we first thought.

I think the fact that the apps are so interactive, so simple and so easily personalised makes them a fantastic addition to any classroom. Paper-based activities are not for everyone and in a school like ours we have to be creative with how we teach on an individual basis. Apps that can be easily adapted to include lessons are invaluable as most of the work is actually done by the app, saving valuable classroom time.

- Ms Allison Hills (Teaching Assistant)

Using the apps within the classroom has been extremely beneficial for our children. As their needs are complex and vary in different ways we have been able to adapt the apps for each individual child.



For example, we have a little boy in our class where English is his second language. When starting the school we were unsure on how much or how little English he knew, as he struggled to integrate. Introducing him to the apps was the best thing we could of done for him.

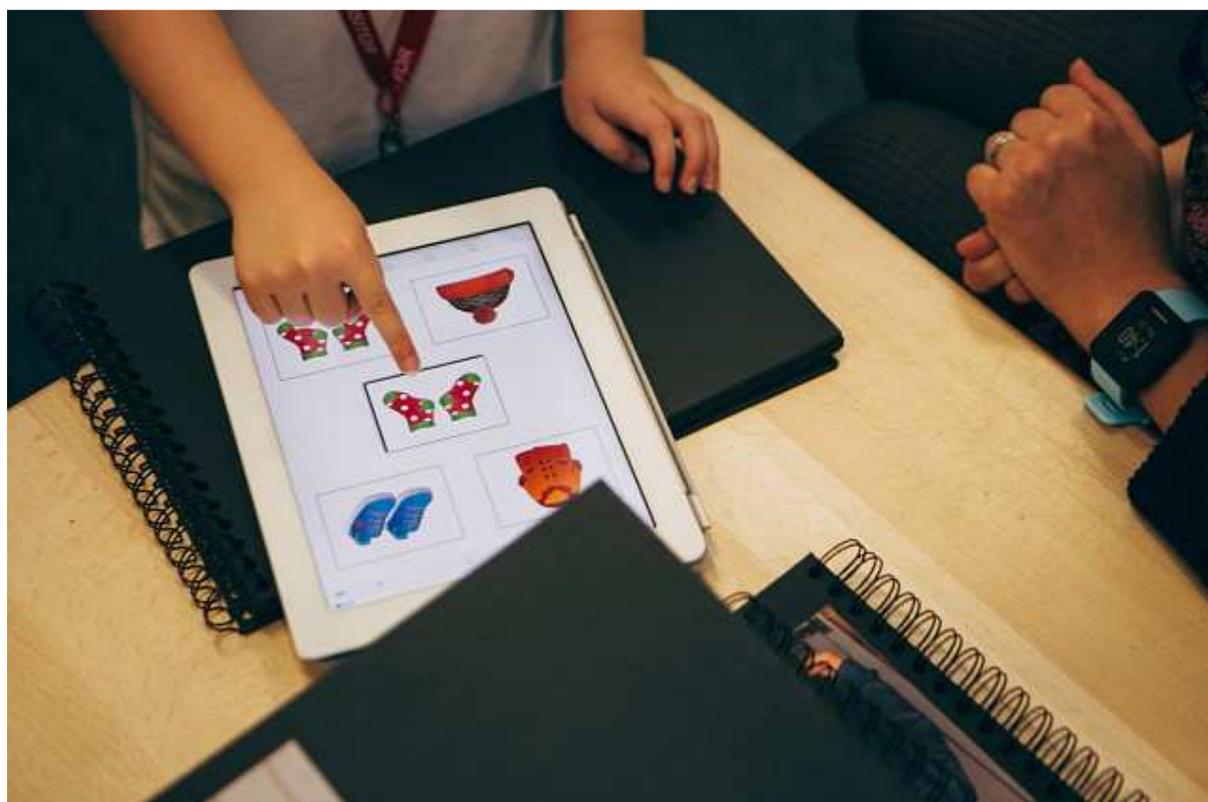
Before long he was able to talk to us to a level that was understandable and by using the apps he actually knew a lot more English than we thought. Now the child has come out of his shell so much and is now able to show us his personality.

Another example of the apps being beneficial is with a child who on a daily basis can be quite withdrawn from the class. At times the particular child may not want to join in with an activity but with the trial of the apps we have been able to give him the opportunity to choose these. As the apps can be tailored to specific areas of learning, the child is still able to access appropriate educational resources.

I personally think the apps are very beneficial for children with special educational needs as they have the 'non clutter' effect. The children are able to easily access the apps individually as they are very straightforward and easy to understand. This works well with the particular child as he can independently work on the app as well as working with one to one support.

- Miss Emma Allen (Teaching Assistant)

HAZEL CLASS



The Special iApps have worked really well with the pupils in my class, especially with the apps ability to differentiate between the ranges of ability in the class.

'Special Words' has been able to engage all of the pupils who had the opportunity to use it and helped them to develop their reading skills, particularly with the pupils using the Whole Word phonics approach. With further and more regular use this app has the potential to become a staple in the pupils' learning.

Most noticeably, the app has been able to engage a non-verbal pupil and develop his picture recognition skills which have had a positive effect in the classroom as he has been able to recognise more symbols around the classroom and relate them to objects and activities. This creates exciting possibilities for the future. For example, it could be tailored directly to the pupils' needs and develop abilities further but on a more personal level.

This app has worked really well from being on an iPad as it allows the pupil to work with an adult in a quiet area but it has also given the pupils plenty of opportunities for independent work. With frequent and consistent use this app has the opportunity to create an overall positive effect on the pupils' learning, with the potential to develop their speech, listening and reading skills.

- Miss L Hirst (Special Educational Needs Teacher)

I am a teaching Assistant in a class of 8 children who are between the ages of 7 and 10. I used the apps with 3 children in the class who have additional needs, these are:

- Down's syndrome and learning difficulties
- Cerebral Palsy and chromosomal abnormality
- Global Developmental Delay and ASD



Child A has Down's syndrome and is non-verbal. He shows little or no interest in lessons in class and would often try to hide under tables or take himself off to a different area of the class where he would try and play with toys or look at a picture book. He does not read or write so checking and questioning understanding is very difficult. He responded very quickly and positively to the apps and joined in and smiled when he got a round of applause at the end.

This was lovely to see as he was really engaged in what he was doing, showing an interest and enjoying himself. It also allowed us to see what he knows and understands in both numbers and words. He managed amazingly with the picture to picture; word to picture; sound to picture and picture to word. He was also very good at ordering and matching numbers. Without these apps we would have no idea of what exactly he is capable of achieving.

I really liked them as his face 'lit up' when he saw the iPad coming out and he looked excited. It was lovely to see him being able to do the apps quite independently and also allowed myself to give my attention to other children if needed whilst he was using the apps.

Child B has Cerebral Palsy and chromosomal abnormality. I used 'Special Words' with him as he has difficulty holding a pencil and writing. He has poor fine motor skills but managed to navigate the screen on the iPad perfectly. His response was very positive to the app and the big smile on his face

when he got a 'clap' at the end was delightful. He often lacks in concentration and struggles to stay on task but he did remain focussed and enjoyed using the app.

Child C has Global Developmental Delay and ASD. She 'mark makes' but does not write. She struggles dramatically with transitions and severely struggles with attention and remaining focussed. She also responded well to the 'Special Words' app and the 'Special Numbers' app.

She loved that she got a 'clap' at the end and had a big smile on her face. She managed to use the 'Special Words' app quite independently and was very engaged when using it. She previously struggled counting to 10. She would count 1,2,3,8, 10. After using the 'Special Numbers' app, with support, she could count to 5 successfully. A few weeks later she managed to count to 10 correctly which was just fantastic. I am convinced that although we used the app up to 5, it definitely helped her in counting to 10.

I feel that her confidence improved with both the apps. It also allowed us to understand what she was capable of as she would often not answer questions or be reluctant to participate in her work. When going on a trip outside of school she struggles a lot and can become upset and anxious. We made a class board to try and help with these situations. We went out for ice-cream and to see a Pantomime. Before these events we showed her the Velcro board, which did help slightly, however, because it was Velcro it is very easy to mix up the symbols and the noise can also be a big distraction.

We did not get around to using the 'Special Stories' app but I can see how this would benefit child C and many other children. An app like this would benefit the whole class as it allows them to see exactly where they are going, they can see photos inside and out; the route there and back etc. It makes what could seem like a scary experience for a child not actually scary at all, which in turn makes it a positive and enjoyable experience for them.

In summary I feel the apps have had a positive impact on the children. They have allowed us to see what they understand and what they may need extra help with. I feel they have helped to make the children feel more included and definitely helped improve their confidence. The children who used the apps could use them quite independently as a lot of children have iPads at home.

I feel the children enjoyed using the apps and were very focussed whilst using them. For out of school visits I feel it is very beneficial if the children can see what the inside and outside of places looks like and this could be good to show the whole class to make the experience enjoyable.

- Ms Emma Watts (Teaching Assistant)

RECEPTION & YEAR 1 CLASS



I work as a teaching assistant at Bamburgh School and currently work in a class consisting of 9 reception/year 1 aged pupils. I have used the apps in this class from 15/11/2018 to 21/12/2018, mostly with a child aged 6 who has ASD, although some of the other children in the class have explored the apps too. We were asked to work specifically with the 'Match & Find' app and the 'Special Numbers' app.

When I initially asked Child H to come and work with me on the iPad he was very keen to have a turn and was clearly, already confident and familiar with an iPad/tablet. Immediately he was engaged in the activity and began to match the picture cards. We then moved onto the literacy app after realising he was very good at the matching activity. H was able to easily operate the app and began to match the word to the picture with sound being used too. H wanted to explore the other apps and chose the numbers app. H is very competent with numbers and found it easy to use the programmes. H smiled and twiddled his fingers when the claps came on after an activity was carried out correctly, this was very encouraging and signalled to H that he could press the arrow for the next activity.

- (Teaching Assistant)